

On Data Mining:

It excites me this week to bring to you an update on the issue of data mining, a subject I feel strongly about.

Data mining describes the ways in which tech companies are able to track students' online activities and target them for profiling and marketing purposes—a compromise on our students' privacy that I unreservedly disagree with.

President Barack Obama this week has announced his intention to protect his country's students from data mining through a new education bill: the Student Digital Privacy Act.

This Act will prevent tech companies from selling collated data on students to third parties for non-educational purposes. It will also stop these parties from engaging in targeted advertising.

This sends a clear message, and one I have been advocating for: that mining students' data for marketing and profiling purposes is simply unacceptable.

In the age of the Internet, I understand wholeheartedly how deeply parents care about the privacy of their children. A survey conducted in partnership with ACSSO revealed the overwhelming disapproval of Australian parents on data mining for marketing purposes, and how they all agree that the practise should be banned.

Australian parents (and myself) believe the Australian Government, tech companies and schools all have a responsibility to protect our students' sensitive data in Australian schools.

In light of President Obama's announcement, I feel it is timely to remind the Australian Government that school communities around Australia agree it is long overdue that they take similar steps to ensure the protection of Australia's students.

Action needs to be taken. Our students' data and privacy should never be compromised.

[Read more on online safety and data mining](#)